

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the fourth full paragraph appearing on page 5 as follows:

Figure 7 is a ~~side-elevation~~ elevational view of a receiver hitch, connected to a vehicle undercarriage, housing a trunnion and double-ball hitch in a deployed position in accordance with the present invention;

Please amend the fifth full paragraph appearing on page 5 as follows:

Figure 8 is a ~~side-elevation~~ elevational view of the receiver hitch of Figure 7 housing a trunnion and double-ball hitch in a stowed position in accordance with the present invention;

Please amend the seventh full paragraph appearing on page 5 as follows:

Figure 10 is a cross-sectional, ~~elevation~~ elevational view of one embodiment of a trunnion, having either a rectangular or right circular cylindrical cross-section in accordance with the present invention;

Please amend the eighth full paragraph appearing on page 5 as follows:

Figure 11 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a trunnion of ~~circular-cross-section~~ cross-section mounted with a receiver of rectangular cross-section;

Please amend the first full paragraph appearing on page 6 as follows:

Figure 13 is a cross-sectional, ~~side-elevation~~ elevational view of one embodiment of a trunnion and base plate, illustrating application of a resilient, silencing collar in accordance with certain aspects of the present invention;

Please amend the paragraph bridging pages 6 and 7 as follows:

Those of ordinary skill in the art will, of course, appreciate that various modifications to the details of the ~~Figures~~ figures may easily be made without departing from the essential characteristics of the invention. Thus, the following description of the ~~Figures~~ figures is

intended only by way of ~~example~~, example and simply illustrates certain presently preferred embodiments consistent with the invention as claimed.

Please amend the third full paragraph appearing on page 8 as follows:

In other embodiments, the stem 18 may be configured to rotatably secure to a corresponding structure. For example, the stem 18 may have a shoulder 20 and a shaft 22 or spindle 22. A retainer 24 may provide a method for retaining the spindle 22 in place. A lock 26 may maintain the spindle 22 at a desired degree of location. In one embodiment, the lock 26 may simply consist of ~~a~~ of first and second locking apertures 28, 30.

Please amend the third full paragraph appearing on page 9 as follows:

Any suitable lock 26 may be applied to rotationally secure the spindle 22 with respect to the platform 46. In one embodiment, a lock 26 may comprise first and second locking apertures 54 and 56 extending laterally through the flanges 42, 44 and the platform 46. These first and second locking apertures 54 and 56 may correspond to the first and second locking apertures 28 and 30 in the spindle, depending on the spindle's orientation within the platform 46.

Please amend the fourth full paragraph appearing on page 9 as follows:

For example, when the hitch 10 is in a horizontal position (as shown in Figure 2), the second locking apertures 30, 56 align and a pin 58 may be ~~insert~~ inserted therethrough to prevent rotation or translation between the spindle 22 and platform 46. Similarly, when the hitch 10 is in a vertical position, the first locking apertures 28, 54 align and a pin 58 may be ~~insert~~ inserted therethrough to prevent rotation or translation between the spindle 22 and platform 46.

Please amend the first full paragraph appearing on page 10 as follows:

Referring to Figures 3-6, alternative embodiments of a hitch 10 in accordance with the present invention may provide various connections between a ~~stem 16~~ stem 18 and an intermediate ~~portion 18~~ portion 16. For example, a stem 18 may secure to an intermediate

portion 16 by any suitable means including threading, welding, bolting, monolithically forming, and the like.

Please amend the third full paragraph appearing on page 10 as follows:

Referring to Figure 4, a trunnion 34 may include a shaft 60 having threads 62 formed thereon. The threads 62 may be fabricated to properly secure to the intermediate portion 16 of a hitch 10. Care should be taken in such an embodiment to ~~insure~~ ensure that orientation and alignment are proper between the intermediate portion 16 and the trunnion 12, in order that proper operation may result.

Please amend the second full paragraph appearing on page 11 as follows:

Referring to Figure 5, a stem 18 may have threads 62 along a portion or all of the length thereof. A fastener 64 may engage the threads, thus providing a barrier to resist separation between the intermediate portion 16 and the stem 18. Various geometries, including keyed geometries or registration elements may orient the intermediate portion 16 with respect to the stem 18 to assure proper orientation of the hitch 10 with respect to the ~~trunnion 12.~~ trunnion 34. If desired, the unthreaded portion of the stem 18 may be keyed to engage the intermediate portion 16 and prevent rotation therebetween. A safety mechanism, such as a locking ~~pin~~ pin, may secure to the thread ~~62, or~~ 62 or to an aperture 66 in the stem 18 to resist inadvertent loosening of the fastener 64.

Please amend the third full paragraph appearing on page 11 as follows:

Referring to Figure 6, in certain embodiments, a trunnion 34 may secure directly to the intermediate portion 16. In essence, the trunnion 34 becomes the stem 18. The trunnion 34 may have any suitable cross-section. In selected embodiments, the trunnion 34 has a cylindrical shape. The trunnion 34 may be secured to the intermediate portion 16 by any suitable method, as discussed hereinabove, such as by welding, homogenous forging, or the like. Locking apertures 28, 30 in the trunnion 34 may serve to register the trunnion 34 with respect to the receiver, ~~thus,~~

thus maneuvering the hitch 10 between two positions or orientations, a vertical, deployed position, and ~~another a~~ another horizontal stowed position.

Please amend the first full paragraph appearing on page 12 and as previously amended as follows:

Referring to Figures 7 and 8, a receiver 68 with a reinforced opening, which may include a reinforcing collar 70, may be secured to the undercarriage 72 or frame 72 of a vehicle. Typically, such a vehicle includes a bumper 74. As discussed hereinabove, a trunnion 34 may serve to register the trunnion ~~34 with~~ 34 with respect to the receiver 68, thus, maneuvering the hitch 10 between a vertical deployed position 76, and a distinct horizontal stowed position 78.

Please amend the second full paragraph appearing on page 12 and as previously amended as follows:

For example, an aperture 75 may be formed in the receiver 68 for receiving a locking pin. Corresponding apertures 28, 30 may be formed in the trunnion 34. When apertures 28 and 75 are aligned, a locking pin may be inserted to lock the trunnion 34 and hitch 10 in an extended, deployed, vertical position 76. When apertures 30 and 75 ~~area~~ are aligned, a locking pin may be inserted to lock the trunnion 34 and hitch 10 in a retracted, stowed, horizontal position 78.

Please amend the third full paragraph appearing on page 12 as follows:

The transition from the deployed position 76 to the stowed position 78 and vice versa may depend on the cross-sectional shape of the trunnion 34. For example, if the ~~cross-section~~ cross-section of the trunnion 34 is circular, once the locking pin is removed from the locking aperture 75, the trunnion may be rotated about, and translate along, the longitudinal axis 11a until the new position is acquired and the locking pin may be reinserted. If the trunnion 34 has a square or other non-circular cross-section, then the trunnion 34 would have to be completely removed from the receiver 68, rotated the desired amount, reinserted into the receiver 34, and then translated until the proper location is achieved where the locking pin can be

reinserted through the locking ~~aperture 75~~ aperture 75 and corresponding trunnion ~~34 aperture 34~~, and apertures 28, 30.

Please amend the first full paragraph appearing on page 13 as follows:

Referring to Figure 9, in certain embodiments, a trunnion 34 may be received into a receiver 68 of ~~rectangular cross-section~~ cross-section. The receiver 68 may be reinforced by a reinforcing collar 70 adding additional strength against or resistance to fracture from the high stress at the opening. An aperture 35 may receive a pin 80 or suitable locking mechanism for securing the trunnion 34 in the receiver 68 and for orienting the trunnion 34 with respect to the receiver 68. The pin 80 itself may receive a lynch pin 82 in an aperture 84 therethrough to resist inadvertent removal. Any type of suitable base 36 may be secured to the trunnion 34. The trunnion 34 may be solid or tubular in structure.

Please amend the second full paragraph appearing on page 13 as follows:

Referring to Figure 10, the illustrated embodiment has a receiver 68, reinforced by a reinforcing collar 70, to receive a trunnion 34 supporting a base 36 configured to connect to or otherwise support a hitch 10. A pin 80 through corresponding locking apertures 35, 75 serves to secure the trunnion 34 with respect to the receiver 68. Additional apertures may be provided in the trunnion 34 to provide a variety of locations in which the trunnion 34 may be secured with respect to the receiver 68. In the illustrated embodiment, the pin 80 secures the trunnion 34 in the receiver 68 against towing loads, as well as orienting the trunnion 34 between positions to which the trunnion 34 may be rotatably moved in order to selectively deploy and stow a hitch 10 connected to the ~~base 26~~ base 36.

Please amend the paragraph bridging pages 14 and 15 as follows:

Referring to Figure 11, a trunnion 34 and receiver 68 may both be rectangular. However, in an alternative embodiment, a cylindrical trunnion 34 may be contained within a rectangular receiver 68 or vice versa. As discussed hereinabove, a reinforcing collar 70 may protect the

receiver 68 against fracture at locations of high stress. A pin 80 may secure the trunnion 34 to the receiver 68 through the ~~aperture~~ apertures 75, 35. A lynch pin 82 through an aperture 84 in pin 80 may secure the pin 80 against accidental removal from the trunnion 68. If the ~~cross-section~~ cross-section of the receiver 68 is square, then the trunnion 34 may, for example, be rotated 90°, 120°, 180°, or any other suitable angle in the receiver 68 between various deployed and stowed positions of hitches 10 connected to the base 36.

Please amend the first full paragraph appearing on page 15 as follows:

Referring to Figure 12, a trunnion 34 may be circular or rectangular in cross-section. Accordingly, the receiver 68 may be of a corresponding rectangular or circular cross-section as described hereinabove. In certain embodiments, a cylindrical trunnion 34 may be received into a receiver 68 of circular cross-section or vice versa. As discussed hereinabove, a cylindrical trunnion 34 may provide transition between positions 76, 78 without necessitating removal of the trunnion 34 from the receiver 68. Multiple apertures 28, 30 may be provided in the trunnion 34 to provide multiple alignments with the locking aperture 75, ~~thus,~~ thus generating multiple positions of the base ~~36, or~~ 36 or the hitch 10 in other embodiments.

Please amend the second full paragraph appearing on page 15 as follows:

Referring to Figure 13, a trunnion 34, regardless of cross-section, is typically constructed to have a manufacturing tolerance with respect to the receiver 68. Accordingly, larger tolerances provide an easier assembly of the trunnion 34 in the receiver 68. Nevertheless, whatever tolerance may be created in manufacture is increased with wear. These tolerances permit vibrations to ~~resonant~~ resonate between the trunnion 34 and receiver 68 resulting in unwanted noise, wear, and the like.

Please amend the paragraph bridging pages 15 and 16 as follows:

In certain embodiments in accordance with the present invention, a damper or sleeve 96 may be installed between a receiver 68 and a base 36 configured to support a hitch. A polymeric

material, such as an elastomeric composition, may have an appropriate ~~resilience~~, resilience and stiffness for selective compression between the trunnion 34 or reinforcing collar 70 and the base 36.

Please amend the first full paragraph appearing on page 16 as follows:

Various sleeves ~~96~~ 96a, 96b, 96c, may fit variations in the cross-section of the trunnion 34. Moreover, since various manufacturers may provide different lengths of trunnions 34 extending between the reinforcing collar 70 and the base 36, more than one damper or sleeve 96b may fit between the receiver 68 and the base 36. Meanwhile, a rectangular damper or sleeve 96a or a circular damper or sleeve 96c may be used according to the particular cross-section of the trunnion 34.

Please amend the second full paragraph appearing on page 16 as follows:

Referring to Figure 14, a damper or sleeve 96 may ~~install~~ be installed between a base 36 and a receiver 68 to provide a force resisting compression. Accordingly, positioning the base 36 in close proximity to the receiver 68 causes a certain amount of compression in the damper 96, biasing the position of the trunnion 34 and loading it with respect to the receiver 68. Accordingly, the trunnion 34 is not free to chatter within the way 97 or interior 97 of the receiver 68. The damper 96 may apply forces in multiple directions. Moreover, a damper 96 manufactured of a suitable elastomeric material may damp vibrations in multiple dimensions.

Please amend the first full paragraph appearing on page 17 as follows:

In certain embodiments, the standard 98 may be manufactured of an extruded material. Aluminum may serve well for the standard 98. Similarly, the trunnion ~~12 may~~ 34 may be fabricated of aluminum for ease in fabrication. Since the standard 98 need not sustain the same loads as may a hitch 10, lighter materials, such as aluminum, or metals of lighter gauges may serve as the standard 98 and trunnion 34. The bracket 102 may be secured to the trunnion 34 by welding, bolting, or by any other suitable method.

Please amend the first full paragraph appearing on page 18 and as previously amended as follows:

A trunnion in accordance with the present invention may have any suitable ~~cross-section~~ cross-section and may have apertures formed therein to provide multiple securement locations between the trunnion and the receiver. If desired, a detent mechanism may facilitate positioning of parts moving with respect to one another. Additionally, dampers may be applied to a trunnion to reduce chatter (relative movement to and fro) and vibration between a trunnion and a corresponding receiver. Moreover, many useful components may be secured to a trunnion. For example, a flagpole standard or the like may be secured to a trunnion to provide securement of a device, such as a flagpole, to a vehicle.